THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE REV. DAVID BUTLER, D. D.

VOL. V.] May, 1835. [NO. V.

REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL

A Sermon,

BY THE REV. DAVID BUTLER, D. D.

FORMER RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TROY, N. Y.

Revelations ii. 10.—"*Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"

This is the direction and the promise Christ gave by his servant John, to the church in Smyrna. He first informed them of the sufferings they must expect to endure for his sake; and to encourage them to patience, and resignation under them, he gave them the promise contained in our text. He tells them that the devil should cast some of them into prison, that they might be tried; and that they should have tribulation; but that they need not be dismayed at the prospect, he adds this encouragement—Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

From these words, I shall first show that we must expect trouble in our Christian course; secondly, what it is to be faithful to Christ; and thirdly, the encouragement he has given us to be so; "I will give thee a crown, a crown of life."

Although we are not now exposed to persecution as the primitive Christians were, yet we must not expect to run our heavenly race with uninterrupted delight. We have yet the great spiritual enemy to contend with, that the primitive Christians had; and he not only annoys us with his immediate temptations and allurements; not only endeavours to frighten us with the difficulties and dangers in our way; and to seduce us with the pomps and pleasures of the world; but he stirs up

his wicked instruments to harass and perplex us; to excite the bad passions of our nature; the malignity of revenge, and the unhallowed desire of triumphing over our enemies; not the triumph of tranquil, patient resignation; unruffled composure, and a hearty disposition to return them good for evil; but to disturb and distress them, as they disturb and distress us. Nor is it merely the abuses of the irreligious and profane that we are exposed to in our Christian warfare; but even Christians themselves, from the imperfection of their judgment, and the remaining corruption of their nature, are liable to injure each other. As we are renewed day by day, we are never perfectly restored to holiness, till days cease to be numbered with us, till we lie down in the dust, and sleep in Jesus.

The pious Christian, therefore, sensible of his own infirmity; feeling that he himself is liable to offend, calculates frequently to be grieved by his Christian brethren; cheerfully takes up this cross; and endeavours to be in the habitual frame of overlooking such offences; of taking them patiently, and of forgiving them, as he expects to be forgiven. This he considers as one part of the tribulation attending his earthly trial. But this is far from being all, or the worst that he has to endure. Though *renewed* in the general frame of his mind; though fixed in his principles, and habitually devoted to God, still the conquest is not yet won; the victory is not yet obtained over all his spiritual enemies; it is yet "through much tribulation" that he must enter into the kingdom of God. Inclination, even in the best Christian, does not always harmonize with duty; but so far from it, that the self-denial required in him, is frequently like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye. Even the great Captain of our salvation, (who was touched with the feeling of our infirmity,) shrunk from the demands of justice, when he had taken upon him to answer for the sins of the world. "Father," says he, "if it be possible, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not *my* will, but *thine* be done." Here was perfection in our nature, and here was a triumph, that no mere man, in every instance of duty, ever attained.

The good Christian habitually yields his will to the will of God; still he is frequently defective; and were there not forgiveness with God, he would inevitably fall under his malediction. Innumerable are the temptations that beset us; on every side we are exposed to danger; and though in all our trials the spirit is willing, yet the flesh is weak. All who are striving to overcome the world, know it to be a painful conflict; and unless this is done, we cannot be good Christians. If we love the world, an apostle tells us, "the love of the Father is not in us." How alarming is this consideration! Here we are in a world, where we want many things even to subsist in it; and it holds out many pleasures and enjoyments, that we naturally most eagerly crave. Yet we must not love the world; we must set loose to all its enjoyments, or the love of the Father is not in us. This is a hard saying to flesh and blood. Here we have friends and relations that are near and dear to us—fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and children, that are most tenderly regarded; yet all these we must love in subordination to God, and be willing to resign them, whenever he sees fit to call them from us, or us from them.

Thus we see how hard it is for those endued with tender affections, as well as for the rich, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. These are objects that naturally draw forth the warmest affections of our hearts: and it requires no small degree of vigilance, care, and self-denial, to restrain them within due bounds, and to elevate them to that great and good Being, who gave us our existence; encircled us round with these dear connexions, and spread before us every enjoyment we possess.

Here then is a trial; and often a severe one, of our devotedness to God; a trial that even the best Christian must find it difficult to go through with safety.

But it is not only the tender instincts of our nature, that expose us to difficulties and dangers in our Christian course; many directly evil principles remain to be subjugated, even in the renewed heart. The remains of the old man will continue with us, while we dwell in these houses of clay; till they are put off, and our probation closed, we shall be perpetually solicited to

deviations from duty. Being under the necessity of providing for ourselves, and keenly feeling our own wants, we are extremely exposed to inordinate selfishness; to be so attentive in gratifying our own cravings, and desires, as to overlook, and neglect those of others. This is a trial, in which we see many, who are *not far* from the kingdom of heaven, totally fail; and vast numbers who have professedly set their faces thitherward, still, in practice, clinging so fast to the riches of the world, that it is to be feared they will not loose their grasp, till the gate of heaven is fast barred against them; and they perish with their beloved treasure. To quit this hold, requires *great*, and painful self-denial. This is the tribulation, that the lover of wealth must endure. Though he may, and ought to be careful of it, yet he can never enter into the kingdom of heaven, if he procures, and retains it unjustly; if he devotes it wholly to *himself;* in short, till he considers it put into his hands as a steward; and uses it according to the direction of the great Proprietor.

Pride is another propensity in our nature, to be contended with in our way to heaven. This is a sly, and dangerous foe to the Christian. Without humility, we can never attain the prize of our high calling. The proud of every description, God beholdeth afar off; and dwells only with the humble and contrite heart. "Learn of me," says our blessed Saviour, "for I am meek and lowly of heart." Pride lurks in the human heart in a thousand shapes: and we must not only be guarded against it at all points, but we must endure mental pain in its subjugation. Christianity does not require us to descend from an elevated station, but to hold it in meekness and humility. This is no easy matter. We are prone to value ourselves too highly, on account of our talents, our acquirements, our possessions, our family—indeed any trifling circumstance that elevates us above our brethren. This moral poison of pride, is sometimes infused so imperceptibly into our hearts, that it even takes the guise of piety, puffs us up with a vain opinion of our own sanctity, and influences us, when we hardly know it, to desire conversions to Christianity, and accessions to the church of God—not from the love of truth—not that others may serve and please God

better, and be rendered more safe and happy for doing so, but to swell the numbers, and give consequence to the community to which we belong, and of course, *consequence* to ourselves. This pride is a thief that will steal away all the riches of our souls, unless we watch, and guard against it, and are constant in prayer to God to be preserved from its unholy encroachments: nor can we expect ever to be rid of its influence, only by a painful struggle of the new, with the old man, for the victory. Christians of every description, high and low, rich and poor, are exposed to dangers from this source, and all must be guarded against it.

Sensual affections are likewise ever striving for the mastery, over those which are spiritual and divine. The appetites of our nature, were designed to give us pleasure, in order to preserve our being: but bounds are set to them, which cannot be passed with innocence. In our degenerate state, inclination stops not within these bounds; and forbidden pleasures are for ever soliciting us to step over the line of duty.

Here again, self-denial must be endured; our bodies must be kept under, and brought into subjection, or we shall never arrive at the kingdom of heaven. Now, by viewing the difficulties and dangers in the way of attaining that moral rectitude, which our reason teaches us is necessary to procure the favour of God, we must totally despair of arriving at it by *our own* strength; without a divine arm to help us, we must feel the necessity of remaining for ever in the depths of guilt and misery. On *our own* strength, therefore, we must not rely. The Christian rises above this view of his state: he knows "in whom he has believed;" and consoles himself in the promise he has given him of help from above; and the assurance contained in the text, that by being faithful until death, he shall receive a crown of life.

Feeling the depravity of his nature, and finding himself sunk in guilt and misery, he embraces with ardour the Saviour that God has provided for him; and relying on the promise this Saviour has given to those who are devoted to him, he resolves to be his faithful servant until death.

What is comprised in this fidelity let us now consider.

Despairing of justification before God, on the ground of his *own* rectitude, he seeks it through Jesus Christ, his mediator. It is not only when he first turns from a course of sin and wickedness, that he feels condemned; and throws himself upon the mercy of God, as offered through a Redeemer; but during his whole Christian course, he is conscious of deserving nothing in himself, but condemnation. He therefore lives by *faith* on the Son of God; placing his *whole* dependence of acceptance with his maker on account of the atonement made by his beloved son. Conscious of guilt, he knows that God, who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," cannot look upon him with approbation, only through the satisfaction made to his justice on the cross; nor even through that, only as he is humbly penitent for his sins; feelingly sensible of his own ill deserts; heartily striving against every evil propensity of his nature, and endeavouring to become wholly conformed to the divine image; to become pure as God is pure, and holy as God is holy. Considering himself redeemed from sin and death, he embraces God with the most elevated affections of his soul, and Jesus Christ his Saviour appears chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The holiness of God, that barred him from acceptance in his sight, till his ransom was paid, fills him with an awful veneration of his character; and while he admires his wisdom in the plan of his salvation, he adores his goodness in the accomplishment of it. No words can express the love and gratitude he feels towards God the Father, who gave his son, God the Son, who offered himself; and God the Holy Ghost, who applies to him the graces of his mediator; and thus renders his salvation well ordered in all things, and *sure*. These are the sentiments of every *true*, and sincere Christian; and by those he is moved to a life of fidelity to his Lord and master. Under the sense of what he has done, and suffered for him, he feels his obligation to love and serve him; and in hope of the joy set before him, he readily, and cheerfully does, as far as human infirmity will admit, all things that he requires at his hands. Still he knows not only that he is an unprofitable servant, but that

his service is very imperfect; totally unworthy the divine acceptance, unless viewed through the atoning blood offered by his Saviour, for his purification. He is therefore faithful in the use of the appointed means of grace; and by habitual watchfulness and prayer, strives not in his *own* strength, but in *that* given him from above, to get the dominion over the power of sin; to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is fidelity to God; and in this way the Christian goes on from one degree of strength to another; and finds himself approaching nearer and nearer to his Maker, like the light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. This is the course the Christian must pursue; in this he must persevere. It will answer no purpose to commence it, unless we go on. The warrior lays not aside his weapons, nor relaxes his efforts, till the victory is obtained. He who runs, stops not his race, till he reaches the goal, and the prize is won. We, as Christians, are engaged in a warfare; we are running a race. The victory is the subjugation of all the evil propensities of our nature; the goal stands at the end of our lives; the prize is a crown of immortality. "Be thou faithful until death, and I (Christ) will give thee a crown of life." To expect such a crown as this, without some struggles to obtain it, would be absurd. We find many requirements in the gospel of Christ, with which we are naturally loath to comply. It is hard for flesh and blood to contend with those difficulties, I have now represented as lying in the way of our Christian course; and they are truly difficulties, that can never be surmounted by our *own* strength; on *our own* strength, therefore, we must *not* rely; but on the grace of God, through which we can do all things. No wonder that we despair of attaining Christian holiness, when we look only to ourselves for effecting it. But God has permitted us to look to him for aid; has promised his "Holy Spirit to them that ask him." We must therefore seek his assistance; and use the feeble powers already granted, till we are strengthened with the grace of true repentance; endued with a *living faith;* and empowered to resist all the temptations of the world,

the flesh, and the devil. We must be careful that all the means of grace that God has appointed, are properly used: otherwise we must expect to remain in our weak and debilitated state, under the dominion of sin and misery.

You attend church! What is it for? That you may be induced by its holy services, and the preaching you hear, to "repent you truly of your sins;" to devote yourselves to the service of Christ, and remain faithful in it until death. If you actually attend for this purpose, and sincerly endeavour, by reflection upon what you hear; and by watchfulness and prayer through the week—if you sincerely endeavour in this way to become *true* and *faithful* servants of God; to learn and practise your duty towards him; if you thus draw nigh to him, you will find that he will draw nigh to you; you will find yourselves daily increasing in spiritual strength; in victory over your evil dispositions; in love and gratitude towards your maker; and in benevolence and good will towards your brethren.

You know that you cannot be faithful even in the service of you fellow creatures, without care and attention; how then can you expect in any other way to be faithful to God?

Those of you who have not begun a Christian life, must immediately commence it, by a *sincere* and *deep* repentance, and those of you who have began it, must, by watchfulness, and prayer, and self-denial, persevere in your course, or you will never attain the prize of your high calling. It is to those only who are faithful until death, that the crown of life is promised. This crown is sufficient to inspire all to whom it is offered (and it is offered to us all) with ardent longings for its attainment; to induce us to use every possible exertion, to make it our own. "Be thou faithful until death," says Christ, "and I will give thee a crown of life."

Here, we are in a world, which, to be sure, has some enjoyments to refresh us while we are passing through it: but God tells us that it was not made for our happiness, but merely as a place of probation and trial; and to us all, my brethren, it is in some degree a sad world. He who lives longest in it, but slightly tastes its enjoyments; and frequently drinks *deeply* of

its miseries. This world bears the curse of God; and all the art of man, can never again restore it to a paradise, or make a paradise in it.

Sent into it with a depraved nature, man is ever agitated with contrary, and contending passions; he longs for happiness, and finds little less than misery; he is ever exposed to be supplanted, and entrapt by the selfishness of others; to be borne down by the contempt of their pride; to be annoyed by their envy; to be rewarded by their malice; to be stung with their ingratitude; to be agonized, and sunk into the very depth of dejection, by the desertion of real friends, and the treachery of false ones. In addition to all this, he is perpetually exposed to sickness, to pain, and to the heart-rending anguish of losing those he most tenderly loves; and his heart must frequently bleed, that he can see them no more for ever. While exposed to all these evils, he must toil here for his subsistence, till death, the king of terrors, strikes his blow, and levels him with the dust. Thus terminates the painful and agitated scene through which we are passing.

This, my brethren, is a true picture of the world in which we live. Now, need any thing be said of the wretched state assigned to the wicked in another world, to induce us by fidelity to our Redeemer, to lay hold on the crown of life he offers us?

Viewing us here, environed with misery, and passing on to still greater in another world, the Son of God left the realms of bliss; descended to our earth, became incarnate, suffered, bled, and died, to relieve us. He came to procure for us a crown of life, and in our text tells us the condition on which it will be bestowed upon us. "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The full value of this crown it is impossible for us now to know. But we know that our bodies must die, and moulder into dust; that our souls must depart from them; and where they go we cannot tell, only as he hath informed us, in his holy word. For these bodies he has procured a resurrection, told us that if we are faithful to him, he will at the last day, raise them up glorious bodies, like that in which he now dwells

in the highest heavens. What a privilege is this, for mortal "to put on immortality,"—for these vile bodies of ours, to become like the glorified body of the Son of God! But not only our bodies are to be thus renovated and exalted by him, our souls are to be cleansed in his blood; to be freed from all moral impurity, to become spotless in the sight of God, and elevated to a *near* approach to his divine majesty. We are to dwell with God; we are to "see him as he is," and to be for ever increasing in his likeness. We are to associate with angels; with them we are to surround the throne of God; and with them participate of his smiles for ever and ever. There no enemy will ever approach; there no envy, no malice, no hatred will be found; but all will be love, joy, and peace. Then all tears will be wiped for ever from our eyes; and we shall drink perpetually out of those rivers of pleasure that flow at God's right hand for ever more. Surrounded as we now are with wretchedness; exposed as we are to want, to sickness, to pain, and to death; is not the offer of this blessed state enough to induce us to live the life of Christians, to endure the cross of Christ, to be his faithful servants until death? If not, consider then, that all the wretchedness that we now endure, is but the prelude to still greater, in the world to come. "The wicked, and all the people that forget God, shall be turned into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Let us, therefore, none of us live wickedly; let none of us forget God; let us all remember our Creator, and be careful to learn and do his will. Then shall we experience his mercy and loving kindness; he will guard our footsteps by day, and watch over our slumbers by night. If we live by *faith*, and not by *sight*—yield our wills and inclinations to the will of God, he will shield us from all the fiery darts of our spiritual enemy, and give us the victory over every evil propensity of our nature. God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. In him he says to each one of us, "my grace is sufficient for thee;" in him he tells each one of us, be thou "faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

GOD'S GREAT GIFT TO FALLEN MAN,

A Sermon,

BY THE REV. ROBERT DAVIES,

Missionary, officiating in Christ Chapel, Belleville, and at Camptown, and Hoboken, New-Jersey.

John vi. 3.—"*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

THIS is the language of one who delighted in doing good; one, who knew well the condition of fallen man, and who knew as well, the only efficient remedy for his recovery. Prior to our forefather's breaking the injunction given him in Eden, he was in a certain sense of the word, perfectly holy, consequently, perfectly happy; and as such, in the enjoyment of communion with God, having a nearness of spiritual access to his heavenly father: but, by a breach of that law which spiritually cemented man to God, and linked, as it were, the creature to its Creator; by a *breach* of that divinely appointed law, the link was severed, the cement was broken, and man was hurled to an awful distance from a pure, and a holy God. And, when we consider the circumstances in which man was originally placed, and view him in his nature, his propensities, his corporeal engagements, and his intellectual pursuits, prior to the period when he was debased by sin, how beautiful, how cheering, how enviable the state, and yet how horrific is the contrast! *Then* man's nature was as pure, as holy, and as happy as his Great Original could create him, nothing then was requisite for the creation of momentary joy, fleeting and transitory delight: ah, no! he had then one continued routine of paradisaical happiness, pure as it emanated from the source of unmingled bliss. His nature then partook of that great and glorious God who made him. Then his frame was not enfeebled and emaciated by disease; then, he was not the subject of affliction; then his body was not writhing with agony, and rendered tremulous by pain, or his countenance distorted by anxiety and care; no! but on the contrary, beamed with placid serenity, and meek delight

His propensities were not *then*, as they *now* are, "beastly, sensual, and devilish;" entailing upon them all the concomitant diseases! His pursuits were simple, and yet interesting; his labour was easy, and not oppressive; all his corporeal exertions harmonized with his powers, and all were in unison with, and conducive to his delights.

Again—His intellectual powers were then engaged in holding spiritual converse with his God: then, he communed in silence, as a kindred spirit with his Maker, or loudly tuned his harmonious voice in grateful songs of adoration unto *Him* who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever; and the clouds of heaven wafted their genial rays of glorious delight from their fructifying source, to earth; in due time, returning in lays of thankfulness to Him who so liberally bestowed them.

But, although God had thus imparted unto man every good and perfect gift, requisite for his happiness and well being, accompanying them with a direct intimation of his requirements, and a knowledge of the penalties attached to the non-fulfilment thereof; yet, man, freely, willingly, and I had almost said deliberately, subjected himself to the curse, and penalty of the broken law; thereby engaging in the laborious labour of sin and iniquity, and subjecting himself to the yoke and bondage of the devil; but although he had thus acted, God in his denunciation of the curse, accompanied it with a promised blessing, viz. "That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" for the accomplishment of which, Almighty God, in the *infinitude* of his mercy, "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I. We will notice that most prominent feature of our text, "Love."

Love is one of the most prominent features in animate creation; the most genuine of which is perhaps that instinctive love, or filial affection, which all animate creation evinces towards their helpless offspring; but this love, genuine as it is, is liable to change and fluctuation, and at best, is of a fleeting, and momentary nature, which, after a short time, or at most,

the lapse of a few years, becomes partially effaced, or totally obliterated. This fact I conceive requires no specific case to be named by way of elucidation, being fully evinced, year after year before us, in the inferior tribes of animate creation; nay, if we look at man, how often do we find it but the principle of a day; and not unfrequently have we known those who have passed month after month, and year after year, on terms of the closest intimacy and friendship, severed by a blast of Providence, and that heart, which for years, has professed love and affection, alienated through some supposed slight, or injury received even of the most insignificant description: have we not heard of brother acting in avowed hostility to brother, each diabolically striving for the other's overthrow! nay, have we not met with instances where children have been arrayed against their tender hearted parents; striving to effect their ruin; and, thus bringing their "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave;" so that love, from man to man, in its most genuine state, is fickle, fleeting, and transitory. But my brethren, *not so* the love of God.

1st. We will view it in its nature. Here we would observe that it is pure and disinterested. It is perhaps seldom or never known to be the case that amongst men, an object is beloved, unless such object has some real, or fancied merit attached to it: for instance—if this principle, operates in us towards some fellow-creature, it is because we see in him some real, or fancied merit, some kindred likeness; some fellow-feeling; some intellectual worth, or meritorious act, which we wish to appreciate; some benefit conferred, or some evil far removed, begetting in our minds esteem; eventually ripening into love. But love thus engendered, though pure and praiseworthy, cannot be termed *disinterested* love; but, the love which God bears to our fallen race is in the strictest sense of the word, pure and disinterested: for what merit, real or fancied, in his carnal state, has man to boast of? What kindred likeness does he bear towards his Maker? What beautiful, or captivating? What comely, or prepossessing in his person, to make him by his God, to be desired? What evil can he avert, or benefit confer?

Ah, none! but rather he needs all that his God bestows, and blessed be his name, much as it is, on our parts, 'tis unmerited and free, so that well might the poet exclaim,

> "Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my life, my soul, my all."

2dly. Its degree. In its degree, it is every way worthy of its author: not narrow or contracted, not mean, and grovelling; not fleeting and unstable; no! but, 'tis boundless as infinitude; exalted as its source; fixed and established as the Rock of ages. Oh! this love! what tongue can tell? Not mine! What heart can conceive? Not yours.—Oh! His love! what mind can *fully* comprehend? Not mortals. No my brethren, fully to understand that passage, "God is love," mortal must put on immortality, and time be lost in eternity.

3dly. Its *universality*. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believed in Him might not perish, but have eternal life." By this term we are to understand the whole human race; all that ever did, do now, or will hereafter inhabit this earth. Here, if we glance at the antediluvian race, we behold God's love strikingly exemplified; and though they continued, age after age, in open rebellion against their maker: yet he sent them invitation after invitation, warning after warning, until, by their continued obduracy, they provoked Him to their own destruction; and he swept them by the general deluge, into an eternal world. But did his love cease with their overthrow? No, a remnant was saved, and how did they act? Alas! they returned again, "like the dog to its vomit, and as a sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire;" but he again evinced his love through the medium of his servants, until at length, the climax of that love was manifested, in the fulfilment of the promised Gift of "His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON." Yes, God, in the universality of his love, by the gift, death, and resurrection of his Son, burst the bars of death, arose from the gloomy vale in triumph, and (if the expression may be allow-

ed) opened a door at the other end of the valley, thereby letting in a flood of immortal light, of heavenly day; so that the path became plain and easy; so enlightened that it needed not charts of man's invention to illume the way: no, it became so plain that "the way faring man, though a fool, need not err therein."

Again,—in its universality, are included all nations, people, and tongues; from the greatest monarch that ever swayed a sceptre, or wore a diadem, down to the most insignificant creature that ever grovelled in human shape; for "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Yes, are you poor, and halt, and maimed, or blind, yet God's love is presiding over you; are you wretched, and forlorn, yet *He* regards you; are you so circumstanced that you have daily to drink of the cup of sorrow, and nightly to lie down in affliction, yet *His* love is over you; and after a few more years, or months, or days, have encircled your care-worn brows, you will, if faithful, be landed safe on Canaan's shore.

II. But, secondly, we will proceed to state the importance and necessity of the gift. As the crime by which man forfeited the favour of his God was great, it necessarily followed that the expiation for such crime must be equally so; and as finite creatures could not satisfy the just demands of an infinite Creator, it necessarily followed that some other way should be opened, whereby a reconciliation might be effected, between an offended God, and offending man. And blessed be his name, a new and living way was opened; this *way* was Christ,—this new and *living-way*, was by the death of the Saviour. So necessary was this gift, that God himself, in the person of his Son, condescended to mingle upon earth with man; to lead a suffering and a painful life, and finally to die an ignominious death.

1st. It was necessary, because man was created an immortal being, one whose existence must run parallel with eternity, and who must necessarily spend such eternity in happiness ineffable, or misery inexpressible. Yes,—in man was planted an immortal principle, that should survive "The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds:" surviving that period when the Archangel's

trump shall rouse the dead to life ;—when the stars shall fall from heaven, and the sun become black as sackcloth! when the angel of the Lord shall swear, "by Him who liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be time no longer."

2dly,—It was necessary, because there was no other medium through which man could attain the forfeited favour of his God,—"For there was no other name given, whereby man could gain the lost favour of his God, neither is there salvation in any other." No! nor is any other name needed, nor any other required, for it is an all-sufficient name,—it is an all-prevailing name,—a name by which sinners may obtain access to a throne of grace, and find redemption through its blood. But, as to the importance of the gift. The importance of a gift is generally estimated by the object which that gift is intended to accomplish : for instance, were you to see a poor forlorn wretch on the point of death, for want of the necessaries of life, and you were to offer him gold, or silver, which to you or him, in other circumstances, would be of the utmost value, with what indifference would he regard them, and with quivering lips, and faltering tongue, he would exclaim, "'Tis bread ! bread ! I want ! Gold or silver will not now satisfy the cravings of my appetite ; give me bread, or I perish." Or see the poor mariner tossed on the boisterous ocean, and momentarily expected to be ingulfed within its bosom, his countenance pale and ghastly ; speak to him of his house, his property, and earth's gay charms, and as he views appalled the big waves, rolling wave after wave, he is ready to exclaim, in the phrensy of his mind, "It is life ! life ! I want!" Yes,—and so it is with a convicted sinner. He sees that he is perishing for want of "the bread of life ;" offer to him, if you please, earth's gay baubles, he may turn them over, he may view them ; but ah ! they do not satisfy ; no, 'tis bread he wants, the "Bread of Life;" that all-sufficient portion of Him who said, "I am the Bread of Life : he that cometh unto me shall never hunger." "Lord, evermore give us of this bread." Yes, my brethren, a sinner is a mariner, tossed on the boisterous ocean of time, just about to be launched into eternity, the waves of affliction have long been rolling

around him, and now the gulf is in view,—'tis life! life! immortal, eternal life he needs, and through the gift of God he may obtain it.

Again,—the importance of the gift is legibly stamped upon it: for what but the importance of it could have induced so great a Being to become a sacrifice for man, who is but the creature of a day! Well might the royal psalmist rapturously exclaim, "What is man, that thou regardest him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" When we consider this gift, prior to its descent, as surrounded by myriads of angelic hosts, constantly hymning his praises—when we view that gift from the period when cradled in the manger, to the close of its mortal career, in the weight of affliction which throughout that period He bore, is stamped in characters so legible, that "they who run may read" its importance and neccessity. Oh! was ever love like this? View that gift, when in the garden of Gethsemane—he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood;—see that blessed Saviour, when he exclaimed "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Behold Him when, with resignation to his Father's will, he cried, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Hearken to this blessed Saviour, when extended on the accursed tree—in agony of soul, he cried, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" Then ask if the only begotten son of God suffered thus for you, and me, can we for a moment doubt the important necessity of such a gift?

III. But we will, in the third place, briefly proceed to notice the blessed effects conditionally derived through the medium of this gift. The condition is here specifically stated, viz: "That whosoever *believeth* on him, shall have eternal life."

Man is a free-will agent, being at perfect liberty to choose good, and refuse evil; or to accept evil, and refuse good: were it not so, man could not strictly be termed an accountable being, for it would be unjust to punish him for that over which he has no control. But there are few, comparatively speaking, at the present day, but will acknowledge themselves sinful, polluted, and accountable creatures in the sight of God. The sin-

ner, convinced of this, and feeling his sins a burthen "too heavy to be borne," will fly to the *only* refuge set before him: he believes that the debt contracted by him, can never be discharged; that the crimes he has committed can never be effaced, but by the all-purifying blood of Jesus, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This he feels to be his only refuge. Thus then, one of the first things necessary to be believed, in order to man's salvation, is, that he feels himself a helpless, undone, and needy creature. Ah! how he then looks around him, and inquires, like one of old, "what must I do to be saved?'—where is salvation to be had? Hope darts a genial, and vivifying ray across his beclouded mind, and under the fructifying beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the film of nature's darkness is removed, and his aspiring soul already sees through the vista which his adversary had placed before him; his eyes sparkle with joy; his ears tingle, as it were, with harmony; his heart bounds with delight; and he, by faith, beholds Christ as his all in all, and his only Saviour—he believes him to be a propitiation for his sins, and for the sins of the whole world; a free, a full, a sufficient sacrifice—as though there had not been another transgressor on the face of the habitable globe.

Again,—we must believe on him as a present Saviour; as one now willing, and now waiting to be gracious, to all who call upon him: not acting upon that too general principle of procrastination, that soul-destroying evil, making salvation an after consideration; a good at some future period to be obtained—no, but a present salvation; and who knows, but that with reference to any of us, to-morrow may be too late. Oh! then, believe *now* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved; and thus having believed, we shall escape the first effect mentioned in our text, viz: that of perishing; and realize the second, viz: inheriting eternal life. And who can tell what it is to perish! to perish, did I say? yes!—to be driven from the presence of an offended God!—to call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon, and hide us from the frown of an avenging God! To perish! yes—to be hurled into that gulf, where

there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for ever; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; eternally to be exclaiming, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." To perish! yes—to look back upon a misspent life, with horror; and while we look, the dreadful conviction rushing upon our harrowed souls; while we are compelled to exclaim, "Time *lost*—Eternity *lost*—Heaven *lost*—the company of the just made perfect, *lost*—the society of Angels and Archangels, and all the heaven-born choir, *lost*—the refulgent beams of the Sun of Righteousness eclipsed, and the soul-vivifying rays, emanating from the throne of Deity, *lost*—and the efficacy of atoning blood for ever, and for ever *lost!* Then, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye need not perish, but shall have *eternal life.* And what, my hearers, is eternal life? Nay, 'tis mystery, all; a something, of which we can form but a poor conception: a height of happiness, of which we can have, in our present state, but an imperfect view: but, blessed be God, this we know, that it is "a *weight* of glory," "a far more exceeding weight of glory," yes, "a far more exceeding, and *eternal* weight of glory." Glory ineffable; glory inexpressible; glory that will never end. But though this glory is within our reach, yet mark, it is not a compulsatory glory—we must believe in order to obtain it. Oh! what a desideratum, when, by faith, the Christian believer has the world under his feet, heaven in prospect, and Christ in his heart.

Finally—"God *so* loved." Did you observe those few, but comprehensive words, "*so* loved?" Can you define it? Can the most expert mathematician that ever contemplated what was capable of being numbered, or measured, define it? Can the most erudite theologian that ever graced the world, or adorned the man, define it? "*So* loved"—Can the mental sight of the most piercing spiritual philosopher direct his view to its illimitable heights? "*So* loved"—See that angelic Being, in his refulgent glory, standing on heaven's high battlements, with an immortal, immeasurable plummet in his hand, stretching over the wide abyss of space; and, as it descends deeper, and deeper, and yet deeper still—hear the sound, as it

vibrates from north to south, from east to west; from the torrid to the frigid zones; from the highest pinnacle of immortal glory, down to the bottomless recess of hell. "O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Yes, "God *so* loved the world," that the most illiterate may know something of that love: for if Christ dwell in his heart by faith, "he may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

And now, allow me briefly to ask, have you believed on Him, with the heart unto righteousness? If not, then you can lay no claim to the privileges of the believer; 'tis true, you may to a certain extent, enjoy the pleasures of the world, and walk in green pastures, while here below; but remember, that the brightest summer of enjoyments will be succeeded by a winter of dark affliction: and, though all may now appear cheering and delightful, yet, in a little time, the scene will be changed, and all will be dreary as the mountain wilds. Then, as "God *so* loved the world," and *so* loved you, believe in him, and ye shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Which, may He, who *so* loved us, grant, for his name and mercy's sake.—Amen.

CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

Nothing but thy blood, O Jesus,
Can relieve us from our guilt;
Nothing else from sin release us,
Nothing else the heart can melt.

Law and terrors do but but harden,
While they operate alone;
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,
Soon dissolves a heart of stone.

Jesus—all our consolations
Flow from thee—the Sovereign good!
Love, and faith, and hope, and patience,
Come to us, through thy rich blood.